

'GBVF can make back to school uncool'

The annual back-to-school period is generally a time of great excitement and fresh new beginnings for South Africa's young people.

For many, however, it can also be a period of escape (at least for a little while each weekday) from gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) taking place in their homes.

"Shockingly and sadly, the back-to-school period can also mark the start of a fearful and confusing time when our youth are exposed to abusers in and around the education system - whether these be educational professionals or classmates - resulting in many of our school-going youth becoming victims of GBVF themselves," says Tshepo Sefothelo, Executive Head: Marketing & Communication of the GBVF Response Fund. "As a society, we have a responsibility to create a safer and (physically, emotionally and psy-

chologically) healthier youth. We need to set the example in building-up and educating future generations to treat themselves and others with kindness and respect, through healthy forms of communication. Parents, other care-givers and educators need to be role-models to this end, and even more importantly alongside members of our justice system, be a safe haven for our youth to speak-up, so that they can be protected from harmful situations. We need to work together to put an end to GBVF in our lifetimes," concludes Sefothelo.

